"Berwick Sound, Waite and Sea"/ StrongBack Productions wins Heritage Lottery Fund support

Today, StrongBack Productions has received £49,800.00 from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) for an exciting project, Berwick Sound, Waite and Sea, in Berwick-upon-Tweed. The project, led by StrongBack Productions and working with volunteers and project leaders from the local community, focuses on rediscovering the rich music heritage of Berwick's oral music traditions, The King's Own Scottish Borderers (KSOB) Music Archive and the historic roles of the Town Waites with a view to reinstating these roles.

The project will enable a wide range of people from Berwick to discover the songs and music from fishing and farming traditions alongside research into the processional music of the King's Own Scottish Borderers regiment and the music played by the Town Waites. There will be opportunities for volunteers to be trained by Berwick archivist Linda Bankier who will lead workshops in oral history, interviewing, research and cataloguing. Further opportunities to learn and to play the music that has been discovered by the volunteers will be offered through workshops led by some of Berwick's own musicians in their role as Project leaders. Finally, all of the music unearthed through the project will be performed by Berwick's music groups in a celebratory festival on October 3rd to be held in Berwick-upon-Tweed as a part of the Berwick 900 celebrations.

As an organisation that works with communities across a range of forms to bring into focus aspects of the community's rich heritage that have remained unexplored, StrongBack Productions is looking forward to helping the community of Berwick, from schools to local businesses, gain a deeper insight into the previously under-researched parts of their history, such as Berwick-upon-Tweed being one of the last boroughs in England to do away with the position of the Town Waites. These were musicians employed by the Corporation to accompany the town dignitaries with music as they attended official civic functions.

Commenting on the award, Dominique Le Gendre, co-artistic Director of StrongBack Productions who has been researching and developing the project in Berwick for over four years said: *"We are thrilled to have received the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund and are confident the project will support an enthusiastic volunteer participation in the re-discovery, learning and celebration of so many aspects of Berwick's rich musical heritage.."*

ENDS

Notes to editors

About StrongBack Productions:

We are a brand new British Arts organisation with over fifty years experience of producing great theatre. StrongBack Productions draws on the Caribbean tradition of forging one culture from many histories. For us, the story dictates the form so we create work across a range of art forms that includes artists from every background and reaches out to the most diverse British audiences.

We work with and for communities, telling their stories and celebrating their histories. We always work with new practitioners and create a legacy with each production.

More information about StrongBack Productions can be found on the company's website: www.strongbackproductions.com

About the Heritage Lottery Fund

Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) aims to make a lasting difference for heritage, people and communities across the UK and help build a resilient heritage economy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, we invest in every part of our diverse heritage. HLF has supported almost 35,000 projects with more than £5.3bn across the UK. www.hlf.org.uk.

For further information, images and interviews, please contact

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